

Full Synopsis

Act One

The show opens in a provincial German town in the late nineteenth century. Teenaged Wendla Bergman looks into a mirror, gently exploring her maturing body. She wonders about her changing feelings and wishes her mother would teach her what these changes mean ("Mama Who Bore Me"). Frau Bergman, Wendla's mother, enters and chastises her for wearing a childish dress – she must dress more properly because she is already in bloom. Wendla doesn't understand. Frau Bergman has good news: Wendla's sister has been visited by the stork and now has another baby girl. Wendla asks her mother to tell her where babies actually come from, as she knows the stork story is for children. Her mother tries to tell her but is too embarrassed to go into detail. Frustrated, Wendla and her friends lament their ignorance of these matters ("Mama Who Bore Me – Reprise").

At the boys' school, Herr Sonnenstich makes his pupils recite Latin. Moritz Stiefel has fallen asleep in class, and Herr Sonnenstich embarrasses him by making him recite when he clearly doesn't know the text. His friend, Melchior Gabor, tries to come to his rescue by questioning the teacher's interpretation of the text. Herr Sonnenstich will have none of Melchior's outside-the-box thinking. In his mind, Melchior pushes back against the restrictive teachings of his elders ("All That's Known"). Moritz thanks Melchior and confesses the reason he hasn't been sleeping: he is troubled by mortifying dreams – he envisions a pair of legs in blue stockings. Melchior confirms that everyone in their class has similar dreams, including Georg Zirschnitz, dreaming about his piano teacher. The boys rock out, sharing their various fantasies ("The Bitch of Living").

After class, Melchior promises to enlighten Moritz about his dreams. Meanwhile, the Headmaster and one of the teachers worry that Moritz is polluting Melchior, their brightest student, by association. They take comfort in knowing that Moritz will probably not pass to the upper grade. Later that afternoon, Wendla and a group of girls walk through the woods, discussing their secret crushes. They are all in love with Melchior. Everyone, girls and boys alike, is hung up on the new feelings that are taking them over ("My Junk").

At the Gabor house, Moritz tries to process the drawings that Melchior gave him that describe male and female relations. Melchior's mother interrupts them and, although she is surprised to see her son reading Faust, she trusts him to decide for himself what is good for him. Moritz is overcome with anxiety about what he has learned as the boys and girls yearn with anticipation ("Touch Me").

Melchior and Wendla discover each other in the woods. They sit together beneath an oak tree, secretly longing for each other ("The Word of Your Body").

Back at school, Moritz has snuck into the headmaster's office and discovers that he has passed his midterm exams. He is ecstatic. The teachers, on the other hand, are concerned that it will reflect badly on them if Moritz advances to the next grade. Herr Knochenbruch reminds Fraulein Knuppeldick that he will be grading the final exams, and she is reassured that their school's reputation will be safe.

Walking home again, the girls discover that Martha's father beats her with a belt. They urge her to tell someone, but she is concerned that she will be thrown out of the house, like their friend, Ilse. The girls are troubled by the situation as Martha reveals to the audience the part of her father's abuse that she cannot tell her friends; she is joined by Ilse ("The Dark I Know Well").

Back in the woods, Melchior writes in his journal. Wendla finds him. She tells him about the situation with Martha and says that she cannot imagine ever being hit. She picks up a stick and asks him to beat her with it. At first, Melchior refuses, but then, after a moment of gently tapping her, he is overcome and hits her very hard and yells at her ("The Word of Your Body – Reprise 1").

Meanwhile, at Moritz's house, his father threatens him if he does not advance to the upper grade. Moritz writes a letter to Frau Gabor, asking for money so that he can escape to

America because he has failed his exams and not been promoted. She refuses him the money, but offers to talk to his parents on his behalf. This is not enough, and Moritz experiences a nervous breakdown ("And Then There Were None"). He exits with a gun in hand.

Melchior is very disturbed by what has happened with Wendla in the woods ("The Mirror-Blue Night"). With his journal in her hand, she finds him in a hayloft and confesses to having read some of it. She apologizes to him for making him hit her, but he takes responsibility for what happened. They get close to each other, and he kisses her. As he starts taking it further, Wendla is hesitant but Melchior insists that they ought to be allowed to love and feel something. As he begins to touch her, she tells him to wait, but he reassures her that it is just him, and they come together ("I Believe").

Act Two

At church, Father Kaulbach sermonizes about children betraying their parents while, in the hayloft, Melchior asks Wendla if she is okay; she is lost in what just happened, but she thinks that she is okay ("The Guilty Ones").

Moritz stands alone by a river. He is at the end of his rope ("Don't Do Sadness"). Ilse stumbles upon him and reminds him of their time together as children, playing with Wendla and Melchior ("Blue Wind"). Moritz is distracted and upset; Ilse asks him to spend time with her, but he refuses – he has too much schoolwork ("Don't Do Sadness / Blue Wind"). She asks him to walk her home, but he refuses. She chastises him for abandoning her and leaves. He regrets not having gone with her, but then makes his decision and cocks the gun.

Later, at Moritz's funeral, Melchior indicts the adults who betrayed Moritz by pressuring him so much, while mourning the loss of his friend ("Left Behind"). At school, Melchior gets called to the headmaster's office. They have found his drawings. They blame Moritz's actions on the drawings and Melchior. They ask Melchior if he, in fact, did do the illustrations; he knows that he's stuck ("Totally Fucked").

In a vineyard at sunset, Hanschen and Ernst roll in the grass. Hanschen observes that there are three ways a man can go: let the status quo defeat him, like Moritz; rock the boat, like Melchior; or bide his time and let the system work for him, like Hanschen does. Ernst confesses his deep love for Hanschen as they make love ("The Word of Your Body – Reprise 2").

Melchior writes to Wendla, asking to return with her to their paradise. Simultaneously, Wendla sees a doctor who reveals to Frau Bergman that Wendla is pregnant. Wendla is shocked and she lashes out at her mother for not telling her everything. She gives her mother Melchior's letter. Melchior's parents discuss what to do about him. Frau Gabor believes it is too harsh to send him to a reformatory. However, when Herr Gabor shows her the letter that he wrote to Wendla, admitting that he knew what he was doing, she acquiesces ("Whispering").

At the reformatory, the other boys harass Melchior. They steal a letter that Wendla has written to him, and reveal to him that Wendla is pregnant. Meanwhile, Frau Bergman takes Wendla to a secret abortionist. Melchior escapes the reformatory and writes to Ilse, who shares the letter with the other girls. He plans to go to the graveyard at midnight to wait for her; the girls realize that he doesn't know what has happened to Wendla.

When Melchior gets to the cemetery, he finds Wendla's grave. He is bereft and contemplates suicide. The ghosts of Moritz and Wendla appear to comfort him and urge him forward into the world, holding on to the memory of what happened to his friends ("Those You've Known"). He promises never to let them go. Ilse then stands alone. She reflects on the events that have happened; she is joined by the rest of the cast as they look towards a time when all shall know the wonder of purple summer ("The Song of Purple Summer").

Musical numbers

Act I:

"Mama Who Bore Me" – Wendla

In the musical's intro, Wendla sings about how her mother has not given her "the way to handle things" in life. Throughout the song—in the original Broadway version—Wendla uses her hands to draw focus to parts of her body, parts that her mother have not explained to her the full extent of.

"Mama Who Bore Me" (Reprise) – Girls

After "Mama Who Bore Me", Wendla asks her mother how babies are made. Her mother lies to her, claiming that "in order to conceive a child, a woman must love her husband with whole her heart". Wendla is joined by the other girls in singing the reprise, but unlike the first "Mama Who Bore Me", the song takes on an angrier tone, as the children are tired of constantly being lied to about "grown-up" things like sex.

"All That's Known" – Melchior

Our first introduction to Melchior Gabor, a radical atheist who wishes to go against the ignorant information and rules he was taught in school and at church.

The song is sung during a Latin lesson after his friend, Moritz Stiefel, is reprimanded in class. Melchior attempts to justify Moritz' "error" as another interpretation to the situation and show that he was correct, in just another way. Herr Sonnenstich, the professor, refuses to acknowledge Melchior's insightful understanding of the verse and teacher hits Melchior when he refuses to compromise. Melchior then sings about the injustice he sees at school and vows to make everyone "know" someday.

"The Bitch of Living" – Boys

The show's boys tell of their teenaged sexual frustration.

Although Spring Awakening is set in the 1890s, its songs are much, much more modern. This makes a statement about how problems suffered back then are still suffered now and vice versa. Puberty is still something that teenagers must go through. The rock beat behind this song shows the built up frustration and intensity of dealing with the act of maturing on your own.

"My Junk" – Boys and Girls (except Ilse)

My Junk is the fifth song on the Spring Awakening Musical soundtrack.

The song leads on from a conversation between the girls about which boys they fancy and want to marry.

It opens with the teenage female characters of the musical expressing their daydreams and fantasies about the people they are crushing on. Their crushes are expressed in a way to make them seem like an addiction, a drug, their "junk".

The teenage boys join the song about half way through and the subject shifts slightly to their actions resulting from their addiction; masturbation, being distracted regularly.

"Touch Me" – Boys and Girls

Melchior had written an essay about sex for Moritz, who asked Melchior if he could write down what he knew about sex. Moritz is very anxious about the subject and Melchior is trying to teach him, since Melchior appears to be one of the only characters in the play who has enough knowledge of sex and is willing to talk about it. The song starts while they're discussing the essay in Melchior's house.

In 'Touch Me', the characters sing about their sexual desires and fantasies.

"The Word of Your Body" – Wendla and Melchior

As Wendla searches the woods for flowers for her mother, she stumbles upon Melchior. They reminisce on their childhood friendship whilst considering what it would be like to give in to their physical desires for one another.

"The Dark I Know Well" – Martha, Ilse, Boys

Martha accidentally admits to her friends that her father abuses her physically and sexually and that her mother is either oblivious or uncaring. The other girls are horrified to hear this, but Martha makes them promise not to tell anyone, lest she end up like Ilse, a friend from childhood who now wanders homeless and aimless after her similarly abusive parents kicked her out of the house

"And Then There Were None" – Moritz and Boys

Moritz is told he has failed his final examination, and his father reacts with disdain and contempt. Rather than attempting to understand his son's pain, Moritz's father is only concerned with how the others in town will react when they see "the man with the son who failed." Moritz writes to Melchior's mother, his only adult friend, asking for money to help him flee to America; she tenderly but firmly denies his request and promises to write his parents to discourage them from being too hard on him. Devastated by her refusal, and feeling he has few choices left, Moritz contemplates suicide.

"The Mirror-Blue Night" – Melchior and Boys

In a stuffy hayloft during a storm, Melchior expresses his frustration about being caught between childhood and adulthood. Wendla finds him once again, telling him she wants to return his journal, and each apologizes for what happened in the forest.

"I Believe" – Boys and Girls

Melchior pressures Wendla into having sex. Wendla has never had proper sex education and doesn't know that sleeping with a boy can result in pregnancy. The boys and girls sing "I Believe", whilst Wendla and Melchior are having sex.

Act II

"The Guilty Ones" – Wendla, Melchior, Boys, and Girls

Wendla and Melchior are finishing their moment of confused intimacy in the hayloft; they reflect on and discuss what has just happened .

"Don't Do Sadness/Blue Wind" – Moritz and Ilse

Moritz, having been thrown out of his home, wanders the town at dusk, carrying a pistol when he comes across Ilse, a childhood friend of his. Ilse, whom it is implied has feelings for Moritz, tells him she has found refuge at an artists' colony, and they reminisce in some childhood memories and "remarkable times". She invites him to come home with her and join her in sharing some more childhood memories, and maybe something more. Moritz refuses and Ilse does everything she can to change his mind . After affirming to Ilse that he truly wished he could go with her, Moritz refuses and Ilse leaves – distraught and upset. Realizing that Ilse was his last chance to escape the fate he's set out for himself, Moritz quickly changes his mind and calls after her, but it is too late – she is gone. Alone and believing that he has nowhere to turn, Moritz shoots himself.

"Left Behind" – Melchior, Boys, and Girls

At Moritz's funeral, each of the children drops a flower into his grave as Melchior laments the passing of his friend while touching on the factors that led to his death, including Moritz's treatment by his parents.

"Totally Fucked" – Melchior and Full Company (except Moritz)

At school, the Schoolmaster and Teacher feel the need to call attention away from Moritz, whose death was a direct result of their actions. They search through Moritz's belongings and find the essay on sex which Melchior wrote for him. They seize the opportunity to lay the blame of Moritz's death on Melchior, and although Melchior knows that he is not to blame, he knows there is nothing he can do to fight them and is expelled as a result

"The Word of Your Body" (Reprise) – Hänschen, Ernst, Boys (except Moritz), and Girls

Hänschen meets up with his shy and delicate classmate Ernst. Ernst tells Hänschen about his plans to become a pastor after school, and Hänschen shares his pragmatic outlook on life. He is amazed with how Ernst has remained so innocent despite the horrible things happening around them. Hänschen then seduces Ernst, who realizes that he loves Hänschen, despite the fact that Hänschen is unable to reciprocate the sentiment vocally. This also echoes the first time the song was sung with Melchior and Wendla, which was much more innocent, as the furthest they went was holding hands and it was only a ponder on what would happen if they indulged in their physical attraction for each other.

"Whispering" – Wendla

Wendla, on discovery of her pregnancy, reflects somberly on her current condition and the circumstances that precipitated it. Prior to the song, her mother forces her to reveal the father and surrender a note Melchior sent her post-consummation.

"Those You've Known" – Moritz, Wendla, and Melchior

At the cemetery, Melchior stumbles across Moritz's grave and swears to himself that he and Wendla will raise their child in a compassionate and open environment. When Wendla is late to the meeting, Melchior begins to feel a little uneasy. Looking around, Melchior sees a fresh grave he had not noticed before. He reads the name on the stone—Wendla's—and realizes that Wendla has died after a botched abortion. Overwhelmed by shock and grief, he takes out a razor with intent to kill himself. Moritz's and Wendla's spirits rise from their graves to offer him strength. They persuade him to journey on, and he resolves to live and to carry their memories with him forever

"The Song of Purple Summer" – Ilse and Full Company

Led by Ilse, everyone assembles onstage now to sing about how although the adults may still call the shots with their upright, conservative views, they won't last forever, and the seeds are already being planted for a new, liberal minded, progressive generation

Character Breakdown

GIRLS:

Wendla

Innocent. With every passing day, she grows more curious about the world around her and her changing body. Both vulnerable and a willing participant in her evolution. Explores her newly-found sexuality with Melchior.

Gender: Female

Age: 15 to 20

Vocal range top: E5

Vocal range bottom: E3

Ilse

A young girl who was sexually abused by her father driving her to run away from home to live in an artists' colony. She reaches out to her old friend Moritz in the last moments of his life.

Gender: Female

Age: 15 to 20

Vocal range top: E5

Vocal range bottom: E3

Martha

A schoolgirl who faces constant physical abuse from her father. She harbors a secret crush towards Moritz.

Gender: Female

Age: 15 to 20

Vocal range top: E5

Vocal range bottom: E3

Thea

Wendla's best friend. A schoolgirl who tries to stay innocent and pure.

Gender: Female

Age: 15 to 20

Vocal range top: E5

Vocal range bottom: E3

Anna

A German schoolgirl and Martha's best friend. Optimistic and a bit naive, she has a difficult time understanding Martha's trials.

Gender: Female

Age: 15 to 20

Vocal range top: C5

Vocal range bottom: E3

BOYS:

Melchior

A smart, headstrong boy who refuses to bow down to society's rules. An atheist and radical student. Struggles with his intense feelings for Wendla and his awakening sexual urges.

Gender: Male

Age: 15 to 20
Vocal range top: B4
Vocal range bottom: G2

Moritz

Melchior's best friend, a troubled student. He desperately tries to please his father, but always seems to disappoint him. His haunting sexual dreams and academic failures eventually drive him to suicidal thoughts.

Gender: Male
Age: 15 to 20
Vocal range top: A4
Vocal range bottom: C3

Hanschen

A rather narcissistic schoolmate of Melchior's. He is comfortable with his own sexuality and uses his looks and intelligence to captivate Ernst. Doubling as RUPERT.

Gender: Male
Age: 15 to 20
Vocal range top: D5
Vocal range bottom: Ab2

Ernst

A schoolmate of Melchior's. Naive and easily manipulated, which allows him to fall in love with Hanschen. Doubling as REINHOLD.

Gender: Male
Age: 15 to 20
Vocal range top: A4
Vocal range bottom: Ab2

Georg

A clumsy schoolmate of Melchior's. He is overcome with his feelings for his piano teacher. Doubling as DIETER.

Gender: Male
Age: 15 to 20
Vocal range top: D5
Vocal range bottom: Ab2

Otto

A classmate of Melchior's. He struggles with feelings he considers inappropriate. Doubling as ULBRECHT.

Gender: Male
Age: 15 to 20
Vocal range top: D5
Vocal range bottom: Ab2

Adult Woman

Plays a variety of rigid adult roles.

Characters include:

FRAU BERGMAN,

Wendla's mother;

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK;

FRAULEIN GROSSEBUSTENHALTER;
FRAU GABOR, Melchior's mother;
and FRAU BESSELL, Martha's mother.
Gender: Female
Age: 35 to 50
No solo singing

Adult Man

Plays a variety of rigid adult roles.
Characters include:
HERR SONNENSTITCH, the boys' teacher;
HEADMASTER KNOCHENBRUCH; HERR NEUMANN, Ilse's father;
HERR RILOW, Hanschen's father;
HERR STEIFEL, Moritz's father;
FATHER KAULBACH;
DOCTOR VON BRAUSEPULVER;
HERR GABOR, Melchior's father;
and SCHMIDT.
Gender: Male
Age: 35 to 50
No solo singing